

Our key findings

The majority of Black and other ethnic led organisations in Inner City and East Bristol have grown out of crisis in their communities from mental health, past trauma, poverty and discrimination.

“Many of us grew during the pandemic. We mushroomed under pressure, client intake has increased and we have been fire-fighting ever since. This project has enabled us to carve out time and space to think; and for staff to make time for themselves and to develop their skills and practice.”

Staff and leaders in these organisations are committed to providing the best possible service to people with trauma and complex needs. This can come at a cost to them emotionally and mentally with little access to resources, support and training.

Through leadership training and reflective practice/peer support offered; psychologically safe learning and reflection practices are now more recognised and being embedded within more organisations.

The mental health and wellbeing of all staff is as important as the mental health and wellbeing of people using the services provided.

The programme gave participants the opportunity to pause from high stress day to day work and to find out about and connect with local Black and other ethnic led organisations.

Providing learning where participants are all Black and other ethnic workers and leaders, creates a more empowering interactive learning experience.

“There is huge value in culturally appropriate reflection and training”

This training programme started slowly with low engagement but with a flexible, adaptable and proactive engagement approach it snowballed and attendance grew to a point of being over subscribed.

“Before this project we didn’t know each other and we were all working in isolation; now we are building networks and starting to work together.”

Collective workforce development requires considerable co-ordination which small organisations do not have the capacity to deliver currently.



Programme delivery

19 reflective practice/peer support groups involving 22 individual practitioners.

5 short day training courses with 24 unique learners on Resilience and self care for supporters, Anxiety & depression and Responding to people in distress.

2 CPD accredited Management & leadership training programmes for 24 team leaders, senior project workers and CEO's.

Involvement and connections between 50 individuals from 20 organisations (see Appendix 1).

Additional access to Training Exchange courses including Adult safeguarding and Facilitating reflective practice.

“A community of people working in very different circumstances, who came together and grew together.”

“It took us out of our silos and built trust between us as a group. We need to work together in partnership as collaborators not competitors. We showcased that it can be done.”



At our final event; participants shared the difference the programme has made to staff, their practice, their organisations and their communities (see Appendix 3).

“I am kinder to myself” “I felt valued” “I feel more included”

“The training has empowered me to think like a leader”

“We have new systems in place to support our service users better”

“This programme should be offered on a larger scale for smaller organisations”

“We need more CPD training”

“Being in a room with other black managers and colleagues”

“This programme is groundbreaking.”



Recommendations going forward

Building on our co-produced programme

- Continue to engage new organisations.
“For many the journey is just beginning.”
- Revisit learning needs across all organisations.
“There are some organisations who have still not engaged with the project. Training needs to be more specific to their work for staff to be able to give time to attend e.g. older persons care.”
- More specialist, locally delivered and culturally specific training beyond what the Thrive Bristol programme is able to offer (see page 11).
- Further roll out of CPD accredited Management & leadership programmes to extend reach and prioritise inclusive leadership and psychological safety in the workplace.
- Ongoing development/action learning sets for managers (managing risk, safeguarding, policy development) to ensure increased equity across providers for commissioning.
- Continue to facilitate peer support/reflective practice for practitioners, online and monthly, to further develop practice around building organisational safety, personal wellbeing, responsibility and boundaries within service development.
- Train reflective practice group attendees to facilitate reflective practice sessions in their organisations.

This was co-production in action. Tailor made, flexible and responding to need.

The culturally sensitive nature of this project is so important. Safety and trust has been created.

When we're in the majority we'll have those conversations a lot sooner.

The networks that are being created are so valuable.



About the project

Where did the project come from?

The project grew from an understanding that there are many small Black and other ethnic-led organisations in Inner City and East Bristol who are trusted by people in the community. These organisations are providing support and care for individuals who are marginalised from mainstream mental health services; and the workforce of these organisations does not have the same access to training, reflective practice supervision and peer support as other providers.

What did the project do?

The Training Exchange was commissioned by Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire CCG (now Integrated Care Board, ICB)- to work with a steering group and co-produce and deliver a 12-month development programme for small Black and other ethnic-led VCSE organisations with circa 10 employees or less; in Inner City and East Bristol, to deliver:

- Multiple accessible training sessions
- Reflective practice & peer support

Project aims:

- To develop skills and confidence to provide care and support for individuals experiencing mental health difficulties.
- To embed learning from training through reflective practice processes to improve responses.
- To build community capacity by encouraging the workforce to share their learning with others in their community.

Steering group

This project was led and informed throughout by a steering group of 4 organisations who met 16 times:

Nilaari, Bristol Black Carers, Bristol Somali Resource Centre, and The Training Exchange. Inner City and East Bristol, BNSSG CCG (Head of Locality) and Wellspring Settlement (CEO) were also involved at the outset.

The role of the Training Exchange

As the learning partner of the steering group, The Training Exchange held the project and kept the momentum going; carrying out all the administration, engaging individuals and organisations, co-ordinating all delivery and reporting to the steering group and funders.



Our learning and challenges:

Co-production

We needed to design a programme that was relevant and useful

Based on extensive experience in designing and delivering learning programmes at The Training Exchange, we had a view of what would work. We had to suspend that view, hold assumptions, and understand that through co-production, working with those closest to the problem to drive decisions, we could design and deliver a programme that was relevant and useful.

“The joy of building the project: Our USP is that we listen; because we listen we are able to co-produce”



We needed to remain open and flexible

Whilst it was useful to have a plan, it was really important to be open and flexible with what came up at each stage of the process and adapt.

Co-production takes time and works well.

The original plan was for 12 months, we quickly learnt that in the context of co-production, we needed more time for the steering group to form, to understand local service provision, to clarify hopes and vision, and for people

to recognise the value and benefits of the programme. With agreement from the Locality Team we spread the budget to cover 20 months.

Throughout the project the Training Exchange have reflected on our position as a 'white British led' organisation. *Are we the right people to be delivering this project? Can it work?* The Training Exchange was recognised by the steering group as a locally based, specialist training company with experience in community development and co-production work. The co-produced nature of this project was central to making it work.

Trust took time to build and then the project snowballed

As the reputation of the project grew, more and more people attended the training, events and reflective practice groups. It started slowly with a lot of time focused on engagement and ended with incredible attendance rates and involvement.

Mental health

There remains a lot of stigma about mental health

People on the programme talked a lot about stigma around mental health in their communities. Mental health is not often talked about, or acknowledged, and problems can be hidden.

Verbal feedback included people talk about having had a 'feeling' and now they know there is a name for it, and they understand what they were experiencing. As Mental Health is so taboo in some communities they don't always have 'the language'.

There is a lack of accessible resources and support for black and other ethnic communities

The project needed to allow space for participants to talk about their experiences and frustration about the lack of accessible/available mental health resources and support and the impact on communities. There was considerable strength of feeling and a sense that people needed to be listened to and heard.

Crisis and complexity

Many of the organisations we worked with have been set up as a response to crisis, and with thresholds in statutory services increasing, they experience greater complexity, higher levels of risk, and more people who are disengaged from mainstream services in their day to day work.



Staff and organisational wellbeing

Permission to pause and staff wellbeing are essential

The project gave people permission to pause. People came to understand that, for organisations providing mental health support, healthy leadership and the wellbeing of staff providing services is key to effective service delivery. It has shown participants the value of looking after themselves rather than only looking after the people who use their services.

“Participants have shared how much kinder they are to themselves following attending the training and support groups. Alongside this they make more time to plan and work more closely with their team.”

We need to always consider language

Considering language and avoiding assumptions about shared understanding remains important.e.g. mental health, reflective practice, supervision.



Timeline of delivery

July 2022 – February 2024 **Steering group meetings** started and continued across the course of the project meeting 16 times.

September 2022 **Launch event** 22 people attended this event, from 14 Black and other ethnic led organisations working in Inner City & East Bristol.

October 2022 **Individual training needs interviews** completed with 5 organisations; additional training needs analysis was carried out by Thrive.

November 2022 – January 2024 **Reflective practice/peer support groups** started and a total of 19 groups were facilitated involving 22 individual practitioners.

January & February 2022 **Resilience and self-care for ‘supporters’ training** with 14 individuals.

May 2023 **Project review event** attended by 14 people.

June and July 2023 **Anxiety & depression training** with 9 individuals.

October 2023 **Responding to people in distress training** with 8 individuals.

September to December 2023 **Management & leadership training programme** commenced with 24 individuals completing the training

February 2024 **Project Celebration** attended by 13 individuals.



Community and co-production

The project involved a **steering group**, made up of CEO's and Mental Health dedicated staff from Nilaari, Bristol Black Carers, Bristol Somali Resource Centre, Wellspring Settlement and the Director of the Training Exchange. We met regularly to clarify vision/hopes for the project and identify actions and next steps.

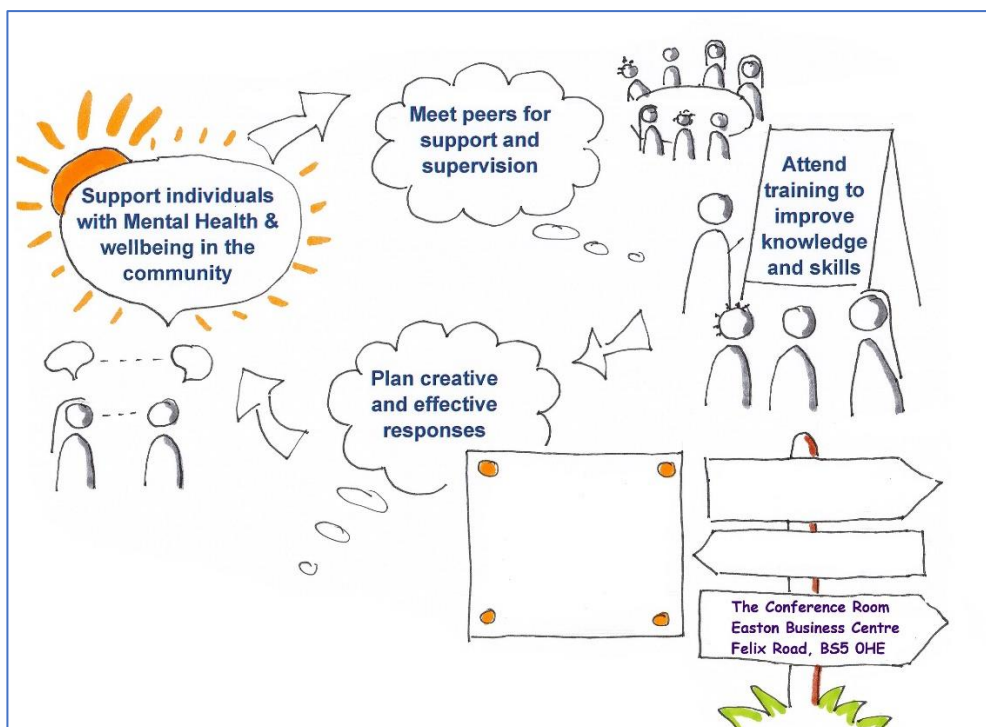
Having the steering group has been invaluable to:

- drive decision making
- build on the trusting relationships steering group members already had with other local organisations and individuals to promote the project ('network riding')
- understand local needs
- keep the conversations live and relevant
- foster a sense of shared ownership and collaboration
- build a shared vision
- identify challenges and search for solutions.

The project adopted a Plan, Do, Study, Act approach (adapted by Qualis Health from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement:

<http://www.QualisHealthMedicare.org/PDSA>)

The project team worked flexibly throughout to respond to the changing environment and evolving need.



Engaging and involving participants

Some of the groups have been harder for us to reach. We were targeting small VCSE organisations with 10 workers or less; many of whom work part-time or are volunteers or have other work and family commitments. Staff and volunteers in small VCSE Black and other ethnic-led organisations in Inner City & East Bristol are in stressful stretched roles. Service delivery is always the priority so people do not always see communications, have time to respond or time to attend.

We used a range of approaches **to involve and engage participants**, including

- a launch/engagement event at the outset
- individual training needs interviews
- a project review and celebration event midway
- a variety of communication methods and ongoing conversations to promote engagement e.g. flyers, emails, phone calls, texts, calendar invites and keeping language clear.



The approach promoted shared understanding whilst recognising the different knowledge, experiences and skills that people bring; and acknowledging differences in values, language, funding status, aims and priorities. The co-produced nature of the project and the time given to it meant that we have been able to respond to the needs of the organisations involved.

The value of a co-produced, culturally sensitive training programme

There is clear value in having locally based, culturally sensitive training, to build and support the Mental Health workforce in Black and other ethnic Led organisations; and where space can be created for psychological safety to learn, share experiences and feel more confident in our actions.

At the final event participants shared how valued and included they felt, as well as how important it was to be learning alongside other black managers and colleagues.

“The culturally sensitive nature of this project is so important. Safety and trust has been created. When we’re in the majority we’ll have those conversations a lot sooner.”



Training has included plenty of space for shared experience to ensure relevance:

- What do we see in our communities?
- What is our lived experience?
- What makes people vulnerable (trauma, discrimination, societal attitudes)?
- What does this mean for the way we work?
- What culturally relevant services can we signpost or refer to?

This has been particularly important in the context of white British trainers delivering training with people from a broad range of cultural backgrounds.

Feedback from training has been very positive.

“Exceptional training. Very informative, trainer was knowledgeable and made the training enjoyable.”

People valued the strategies and evidence based facts shared, generating new ideas to put into practice in their personal and professional lives

“How to look after yourself while looking after others”

The smallness of groups and participatory nature of training was important to facilitate group interaction, discussions and learning from each other. There have been excellent levels of participation and great reflection and interaction in the groups. People felt safe to share experiences confidentially and new friendships and networks were formed.

Some of the learning was totally new to some people. More experienced workers were able to confirm what they were doing well; they were keen to support others in their learning and liked the idea that they had something others could benefit from.

Personal and professional development have been equally important.



Partnering with Thrive Bristol

We worked in partnership with Thrive Bristol to integrate the project within the wider Mental Health workforce training offer in Bristol to avoid duplication, understand gaps in provision, and encourage best use of resources available for the benefit of the communities.

We made a decision to hold back on offering too much training from this project in the spring of 2023 because of the amount of training being offered through Thrive Bristol (Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness, Self Harm and Suicide Awareness, Effectively supporting people who have experienced trauma).

We have continued to promote the Thrive Bristol Programme to the small VCSE ethnic-led organisations in Inner City & East Bristol and, through making links to the networks we had built, to ensure that Thrive Bristol is linked in with the organisations locally.



Management and Leadership training

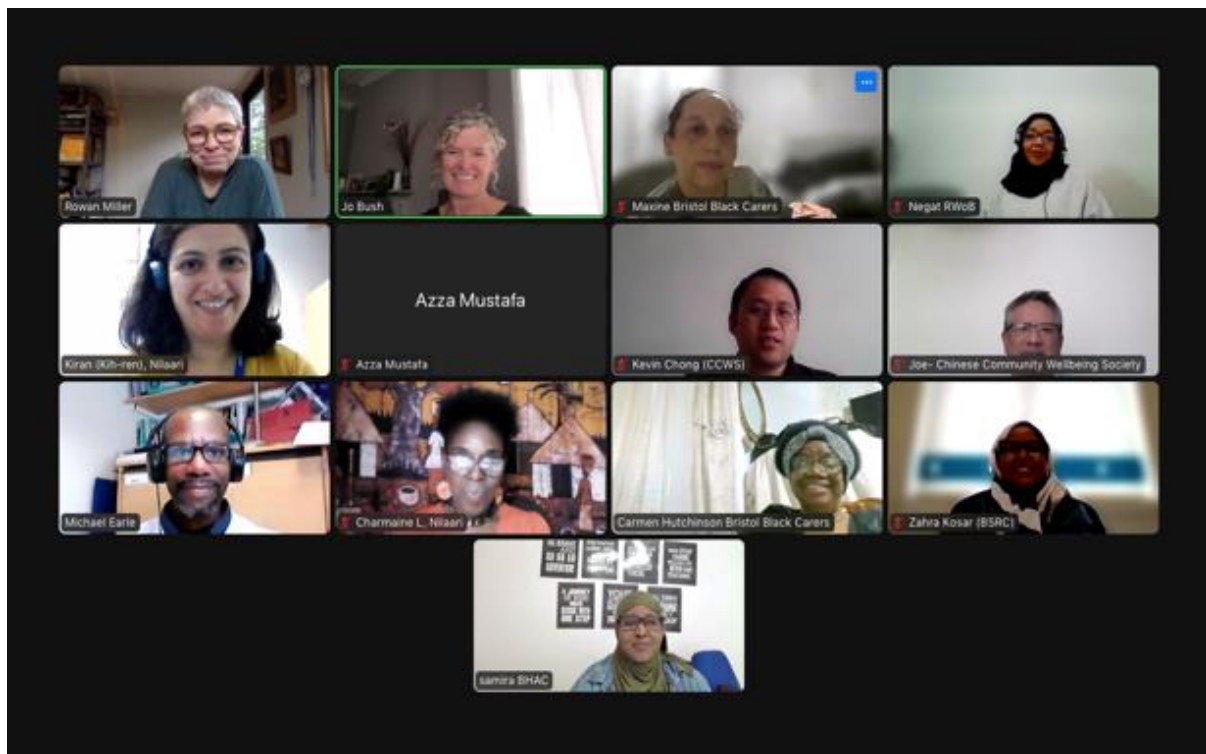
The management and leadership training provided the opportunity for people to be able to learn together and network with peers (other Leaders and CEO's from locally based organisations). They valued the breathing space and time to step outside really busy roles for development and reflection time.

"The course has been transformative in their thinking about themselves in their roles. Managers are walking away happier."

Participants were required to attend 80% of the course for certification. 24 attendees completed the programme and left with a comprehensive 80 page workbook to embed learning. The Training Exchange achieved CPD accreditation for this course from the CPD Certification Service – a nationally recognised quality mark.

"You have my staff buzzing, it is exactly what I hoped it would be."

"We are making the time to think about systems and structures to look after ourselves as managers and leaders, to support the workforce and the service users who come to our projects."



Learning in delivering accessible training programmes

- Course scheduling needed to consider school holidays, religious festivals, prayer times and part-time working.
- There is a limit to how much time people can commit to training and prioritise service delivery support people in any one month.
- For accessibility we delivered the same course content on a Tuesday and a Thursday, with a choice of online and in-person sessions.
- The management & leadership course particularly was a big time commitment for small community based organisations. Pre-booked events, meetings and commitments meant that not everyone could attend every session. In response, we offered flexible delivery, supporting people to switch between online and in-person sessions and times, and delivering additional online/telephone catch up sessions, to ensure people got as much of the learning as possible.
- With rising salary costs and shrinking budgets, many smaller VCSE organisations do not have budgets for training. Training that is free or reduced price at the point of delivery can increase take-up.
- We're conscious that individuals themselves do not always prioritise training and self-care.
- Service delivery and staff sickness can impact on attendance and take up (with late cancellations and punctuality being an issue).
- There is a lot of administration involved in course bookings, confirmations, changes in attendance and cancellations. People do not always see emails, regular communication and reminders as emails and calendar invites are helpful. It is important to confirm and then re-confirm attendance.
- For some organisations, giving time to staff to attend training and development may be in their contracts for service; however, often it is down to the organisations themselves. If a CEO is passionate about staff development; they are more likely to allocate time to this.
- Managers need to be encouraged to prioritise training and self care for staff. *Do managers see the value? Is it difficult to balance time off for training with service delivery?*



Reflective Practice/peer support groups

19 groups have been delivered involving 22 learners. These have been delivered by experienced facilitators, in person and online, and on different days of the week for 1.5 hours each time. Online became the preferred approach to make the best use of time.

The groups were facilitated to provide a safe, regular space where staff and volunteers come together to reflect on practice and support and learn from each other.

Facilitators drew on reflective practice models including Gibbs, Rolfe, Ghaye which they shared openly with the groups.

Agendas for each session ran as follows:

- Group agreement
- Welcomes, checking in exercise, revisit ground-rules
- Any learning/reflections from last time?
- Focused discussion/breakout room reflections and feedback
- Any relevant input from facilitator (as requested)
- Closing round (focus on wellbeing and self-care).



Learning in delivery of reflective practice/peer support groups

“Learning through community”

- Reflective practice/peer support groups are a valued and valuable space.

“Provided space and time to reflect about work – I loved it.”

- People bring real challenges, with a high level of difficulty. The groups are highly supportive; the respect and care shown in the group is deeply held and experienced by all.

“Sharing with the group has been powerful, learning from a lot of different working styles and exploring ethics”

- The concept of reflecting on practice is new to some; people can be used to just doing. For some, stopping and taking stock and maybe doing things differently is not something they have ever experienced.

“Creating spaces like this is so important – meet others, reflect, improve and inspire.”



- People enjoyed initial learning themes e.g. the drama triangle, 5 ways to wellbeing, resilience skills. As the group became more established the agenda became more simplified.

- Participants struggle with guilt around self-care, when helping others is the default position.

“As the facilitator it has been a privilege witnessing people share their approaches to the different challenges of wanting to help others with limited resources, whilst holding personal boundaries and a growing belief that self care is key.”

- Over time groups became more confident with the process. The facilitators were struck by how thoughtful and empathic people can be and felt the internal shift of 'over to you and away from me'.
- Attendance was not always consistent due to limited internet access and other demands. Therefore the groups were 'open' requiring a flexible approach both from the group and facilitator where boundaries are fluid and evolving.
- There are clearly people in the group with the skills to hold the space, but the issue is in creating something sustainable whilst resources are so limited in small organisations. *Who would co-ordinate the meetings? How do facilitators get support for themselves?* The Training Exchange provided space and time for administration support and external facilitation.



Building on the success of this first pilot programme

- How do we ensure sustainability for this project?
- How do we ensure that we are able to build on the work started and the networks established?
- This project has been time intensive in terms of admin and support. How can or can this this work continue without external facilitation and support?

The steering group are keen to keep the momentum going.

The project requires considerable co-ordination which small organisations do not have the capacity to deliver currently.

The steering group valued the role of The Training Exchange, because of the expertise shared, level of support offered and understanding of local needs.



Going forward

The project steering group has identified the following ongoing needs:

- Continue to engage new organisations
“For many the journey is just beginning.”
- Revisit learning needs across all organisations

“There are some organisations who have still not engaged with the project. Training needs to be more specific to their work for staff to be able to give time to attend e.g. older persons care.”

- More specialist/ locally delivered/ culturally specific training, beyond what the Thrive programme is able to offer (see Appendix 2)
- Ongoing funding needs to think about the people who deliver the service.

“Nothing has changed around funding or commissioning in 20 years but what has changed is the deterioration of the communities we serve”

“There is huge value in culturally appropriate reflection and training”

- Further roll out of Management & leadership programmes to extend reach.

“Increase funds for more CPD training”

“We need more CPD training”

- Continue to facilitate peer support/reflective practice for practitioners online monthly.
- Ongoing development/action learning meetings for managers (managing risk, safeguarding, policy development) to support organisations to be fit for purpose.



Appendix 1

Organisations and staff involved:

Back2Action: Director & Human Performance Consultant

Bangladeshi Bristol Women's Group: Chair, Advisor, Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Secretary

Barton Hill Activity Club: Director, Community Engagement Officer

Bristol Black Carers: CEO, Dementia Wellbeing Support Worker, Mental Wellbeing Worker, Administrator, Recruitment Officer

Bristol Central Seventh Day Adventist Church

Bristol Horn Youth Concern: Director

Bristol Somali Resource Centre: Mental Health Coordinator, Community Engagement Coordinator, Community Service Coordinator

Bristol Somali Women's Group: Co-founder

Chinese Society Wellbeing Community: Chinese Lantern Project Manager, Operations Manager

Church of God of Prophecy (COGOP Bristol): Pastor

Dhek Bhal: Support Worker

Nilaari: CEO, Assistant Operations Manager, Mental health practitioners x 6, Administrative Support Worker

Off the Record (Project Zazi): Youth Worker

Pakistani Welfare Organisation: Chair of Trustees, Secretary, Administrative Assistant

Refugee Women of Bristol: Development Manager, Drop in Co-ordinator, Mental Wellbeing Worker.

Sierra Leone Bristol Association

Somali Kitchen: Director, Chef

Wellspring Settlement: Deputy CEO, Social Prescribing Team Manager

Inner City and East Bristol, BNSSG CCG: Head of Locality and Programme Coordinator

The Training Exchange: Director, Associate Trainers x 2

'For change to happen, people need to see the value – and become mentors.'



Appendix 2

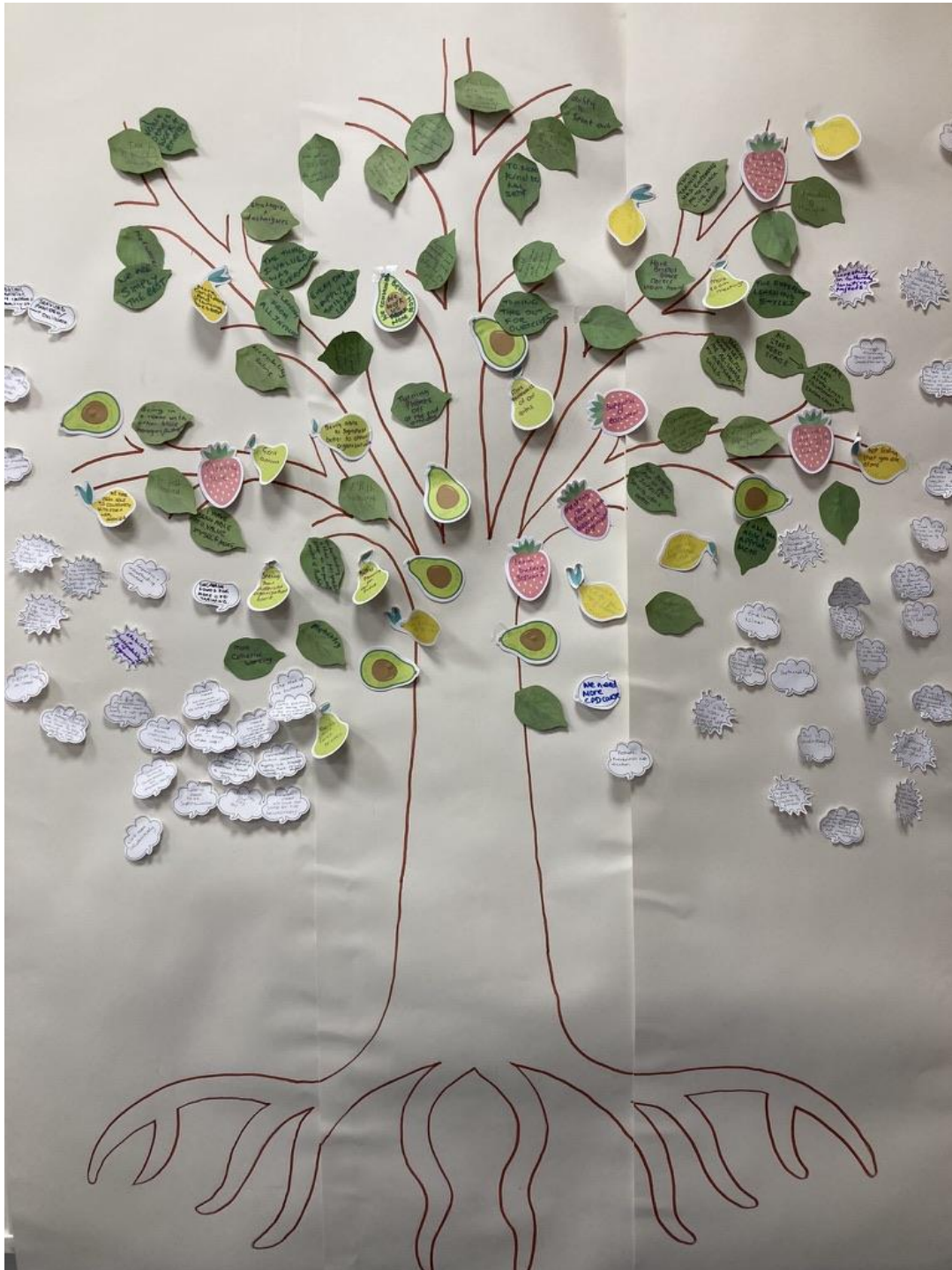
Ongoing training needs that have been identified by participants include:

- Safeguarding training (young people and adults)
- Professional boundaries
- Working with disclosure
- Working with trauma
- Mental Health First Aid
- Self Harm
- CBT Tools for stress and anxiety
- Motivational interviewing
- Working with treatment resistant clients
- Practical positive psychology
- Self care during different seasons of the year
- Resilience skills
- De-escalation skills and challenging behaviour
- Managing difficult conversations
- Training for trainers
- Facilitating mental health groups
- Groupwork skills
- Young people's mental health
- Children's mental health training
- Young people and exploitation
- Supervision skills



Appendix 3

A tree was built during the final event....



The leaves displayed messages from individuals about how they had grown from the programme

The fruits showed what differences they can see in practice from attending the programmes

The white bubbles showed key messages they wanted to share with funders

Leaves: How have I grown?

Ability to speak out

Being able to support new and small organisations

To be more kind to myself

Build relationships with other colleagues and organisations

More positive about my leadership skills

Have Bristol Black Carers Vision heard

This training has empowered me to think like a leader

Taking time out for ourselves

Liked about the training: Freedom in the room to talk – it wasn't restricted

Enjoyed that my staff found the sessions informative and interesting

Should be offered on a larger scale for smaller organisations

Coming to an understanding of what our leadership roles can be

Every day I apply new skills I have learnt

Culture was not an issue! We were understood

I learnt from all involved

I valued everything

Strategies and techniques

Accessibility online

Personally I feel great having been a participant

Turning phones off at the end of the day (looking after self more)

I felt valued

Understanding other perspectives from an empathetic model of practice

I value others work and energy

The joy of building the project

Networking

We are simply the best

Being in a room with other black managers and colleagues

I have been able to value myself more

More cohesive working

Motivating

I am able to appreciate more

Feel more included

Creating a safe space to explore

The different learning styles

Training courses have helped me re sharpen my practitioner skills

Freedom of thought

ALL STAFF NEED SPACE:

Staff

Peer

Advancement

Collaboration

Empowerment



Inner city and East Bristol
Locality Partnership

Fruits: What differences can we see in the way we work now?

New systems put in place to support service users better
 Conversations and discussions on the training allowed me and our organisation to express the outcomes so beneficial to all
 Better networking
 Not feeling that you are alone
 We have applied what we learnt
 A new approach to different users
 Follow up any agenda items that are outstanding
 More team meetings
 Openness
 Being able to support new and smaller organisations – Each one Teach one
 Communication gaps filled
 Supportive of each other
 Meeting new people from different organisations
 Team building sessions
 Better planning before meetings
 Knowing how to manage the Do's and Don't's
 More able to share our organisations vision
 Taking more lunch breaks
 More awareness of our aims
 Confirmation that others in the team are needed
 We communicate better now
 We work as a team more
 Ability to identify different types of leadership
 Ability to work more effectively as a team
 Better planning of our time
 Seeing how different organisations work
 More planning
 Geese approach
 Being able to signpost better to other organisations
 More confident and planning better
 We have been able to collaborate with other local agencies.

Bubbles: What key messages do we want to share with funders?

There is huge value in culturally appropriate reflection and training
 Being able to co-produce makes this work
 Being able to support the smallest of providers
 Stability and sustainability of the programme is essential



Investing in training staff improves the quality of services delivered
 We need more CPD training - Increase funds for more CPD training
 This is the beginning of a Skills incubator – developing people
 Peer trainers and allyship going forward
 Our USP is that we listen; because we listen we are able to co-produce
 This is groundbreaking
 Come and visit us and see what we are doing – an open invitation to funders
 Health inequalities for mental health provision
 Some of the funding processes are outdated
 There are no end of life caring teams and BBC are covering a lot of this work;
 there are no holistic wrap around services – they just do spot checks
 What is the impact – How do funders measure this
 Support and wellbeing for carers
 It has been proved and tested what we do so why do we have to keep proving
 ourselves and getting scraps of funding
 Fund the organisations doing the most work
 Expertise and understanding valued
 Funders need to match the needs of the organisation
 Evaluate each individual needs
 Longer funding pots
 Funders need to have more conversations about service users needs
 Stop making me frustrated
 Funding needs to be sustainable
 Not one cap fits all
 Funders need to cut out some of the beaurocracy
 There is no fairness in the distribution of funds
 Currently funders are funding organisations that are not doing that much work
 Nothing has changed around funding or commissioning in 20 years but what
 has changed is the deterioration of the communities we serve
 Funders need to go out and speak to people and do background checks to
 understand what the project is providing
 Funders fund tasks and services – which creates a dependency rather than
 independence
 Funders ned to look at what they are actually funding and what time factors
 are involved to build relationships and learning
 How do we get to other ICB Boards – the people we are supporting come from
 all localities
 Direct and institutional discrimination from funders giving funding to
 organisations that are not doing as much work



Funders scrutinise black organisations making them jump through hoops and not allowed to make mistakes
Backfill money.

How can we work together to improve mental wellbeing and reduce mental ill health

Continue to raise awareness of mental health

Work more collaboratively

Connections within communities; tapping into knowledge already there e.g. mosques and churches

Identifying what we do and promoting awareness and benefits to the community

Promote prevention not reaction

Through training we gain a better understanding

Build a relationship and show them, allow them to do it and support them to engage

Investing in culturally sensitive projects

Breaking down stigma of poor mental health

Ambassadors and champions to promote the training to others.

